

Weber & Provo River Exploration ¹⁸⁵¹ ₁₈₅₂
In 1851 Big y. called a party ¹⁸⁵³
of men to explore Weber River
to its source & down Provo River
to Utah Lake.

Men in this party 3 Gardner Bros:
Archibald, Robert & William, James
Mangum, Joseph Adair, & James Craig
Ref: Heart Throbs of West Vol 12
p 232
Utah Atlas, p 86 Weber College

Midway Centennial Celebration

Opening Up of The Heber Valley Through Provo Canyon

2-27-91

When Brigham Young, Utah's Colonist and President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, decided that a road was needed up Provo Canyon, he plunged right ahead unmindful of any concerns about feasibility studies, environmentalists or protestors.

Speaking to a group of Provo men gathered at the bowery in Provo, June 6, 1858 he said: "A road up Provo Canyon is much needed, and we want 10 or 20 companies of laborers to go on it forthwith in order to finish it in about 15 days so that you can go into the valleys of the Weber where there is plenty of timber."

In further support of the project he continued: "I understand that a company has been chartered by the Legislative assembly to make that road. If those men will come forward we will take the responsibility of making it. We shall need about 500 laborers."

The Provo Kanyon Company was formed the next evening with President Young subscribing for 200 shares of stock. Feramoerz

Little was superintendent with W. G. Mills as clerk.

Soon the wagon ruts through the canyon were formed into a road and the laborers faced the necessity of building a bridge over the Provo River. A site selected was near the mouth of the canyon. Henry Grow, who later won fame for his construction of the Salt Lake Tabernacle, did the engineering work on the bridge.

When the bridge was completed in October of 1858, *The Deseret News* carried a story reporting that the bridge was "substantially and neatly made and calculated to be of service for many years to the inhabitants of Utah County."

The most important contribution the road made was the opening of Provo Valley (now Heber Valley) for permanent settlers.

On the last day of April, 1859, a group of 11 men under the leadership of William Meeks left Provo to settle in the higher valley. They found the snow still heavy in the canyon and blocked with slides. It took them three days to make the

hazardous and exhausting trip. We make it today in 30 minutes.

Recorded in the journal of John Crook, one of the settlers, he gives the following account. "April 30, 1859, we camped at a snowslide in Provo Canyon that night. The next morning we pulled our wagons to pieces and carried them to the top of the snowslide which was about a quarter of a mile wide.

"Our May Day excursion consisted of traveling on up the canyon from the snowslide to William Wall's ranch, where we camped. The next day, we crossed Daniel Creek on the ice. There were heavy drifts of snow behind the willow bushes."

Names of the other men who made the trip and settled the valley are recorded in How Beautiful Upon the Mountains, a history of Wasatch County, as: Thomas Rusbard, Charles N. Carroll, John Carlile, John Jordan, Henry Chatwin, Jesse Bond, James Carlile, William Giles Jr., William Carpenter, and George Carlile.

The first Pioneer sawmill { winter of 1859
in Wasatch County was established by Fall 1860
William Meeks & James Adams & their
Companions, in Center Creek Canyon
It began turning out lumber by the fall
of 1860.

Ref: 1. Under Wasatch Skies pp 126-7

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